

For immediate release

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Restaurants Join Mayor In Fight Against Obesity

In an effort to fight against childhood obesity and related conditions such as diabetes, Columbus Mayor Michael B. Coleman today announced the formation of a new Healthy Choices Committee. Chaired by Columbus Public Health Commissioner Dr. Teresa C. Long, the committee will include representatives from Bob Evans, Donatos Pizza, the Central Ohio Restaurant Association, consumers and other restaurant representatives. The committee will focus on exploring options to give consumers healthier menu options as well as information about what they are eating.

"Childhood obesity has reached critical proportions in our community," said Mayor Coleman. "I want to thank Bob Evans, Donatos, CORA and others for stepping up to explore how restaurants can help fight by sharing caloric information and making healthy recommendations to their customers."

During the most recent school year, 43 percent of kindergartners, 40 percent of third graders and 46 percent of fifth graders were overweight. Additionally, six out of every 10 adults in the city are overweight, with three out of 10 obese. More than 7 percent of Columbus adults have been diagnosed with diabetes, and the rate is almost twice as high among blacks compared to whites.

"Obesity and related conditions such as diabetes and heart disease threaten a whole new generation of our children," said Dr. Long. "In addition to giving people the information they need, we also want to help parents embrace healthier choices."

Monday's announcement also featured a healthy cooking demonstration from Bob Evans' Fit from the Farm menu.

"We are excited to collaborate with Mayor Coleman, Dr. Long and our fellow restaurant companies to talk about the many possible solutions to the problem," said Chairman and CEO Bob Evans Farms, Inc. Steven A. Davis. "We know that nutritious food and balanced options are important to our guests. It's part of the reason we created our new Fit from the Farm menu, which offers options for breakfast, lunch and dinner for 650 calories or less."